THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) and (b) The Central Board of Trustees of EPF (CBT) has recommended an interim rate of 8.5% for the year 2004-05. The rate of interest on Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) accumulations is determined by Government on the basis of the recommendations of CBT. CBT has hot recommended a final rate of interest for 2004-05 to the Government Orders determining the rate of interest on EPF accumulations have not been issued.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration.

Action against striking Bank Employees

3490. PROF. M. M. AGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the details regarding the strikes by the staff and officers of Nationalised Banks in the country during the last one year as a result of which public had to face great difficulties;

(b) the reasons for strikes by the staff and officers concerned banks;

(c) whether Government have taken any action against such bank employees; and

(d) if not the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI S.S. PALANIMANICKAM): (a) The bank officers and staff had gone on strike four times during the last one year.

(b) The reasons for the strike by the staff and officers included, opposition of Supreme Court verdict on right to strike, the so called anti-labour policies of the Government the privatization move, early settlement of the wage revision, second option on pension, merger and acquisition of Public Sector Banks and Foreign Banks/Institutions/Investors taking over Indian Banks.

(c) and (d) In terms of the extant instructions, the principle of "No Work No Pay" is to be followed by the bank management for striking employees.

Facilities to Panchayate

†3491.SHRI JANESHWAR MIHSRA :Will Mimister of PANCHAYATE RAJbe pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Government is considering to provide facilities for enforcing the Panchayati Raj Act;

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†Ortginal notice of the question was received in Hindi.